This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A converter circuit for switching a large number of switching voltage levels, having n first switching groups ~~(1.1, ..., 1.n)~~ which are provided for each phase (R, Y, B), with the n-th first switching group ~~(1.n)~~ being formed by a first power semiconductor switch ~~(2)~~ and a second power semiconductor switch ~~(3)~~, and with the first first switching group ~~(1.1)~~ to the (n-1)-th switching group ~~(1.(n-1))~~ each being formed by a first power semiconductor switch ~~(2)~~ and a second power semiconductor switch ~~(3)~~ and by a capacitor ~~(4)~~, which is connected to the first and second power semiconductor switches ~~(2, 3)~~, with each of the n first switching groups ~~(1.1, ..., 1.n)~~ being connected in series to the respectively adjacent first switching group ~~(1.1, ..., 1.n)~~, and with the first and the second power semiconductor switches ~~(2, 3)~~ in the first first switching group ~~(1.1)~~ being connected to one another, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein n ≥ 1 and p second switching groups ~~(5.1, ..., 5.p)~~ and p third switching groups ~~(6.1, ..., 6.p)~~ are provided, which are each formed by a first power semiconductor switch ~~(2)~~ and a second power semiconductor switch ~~(3)~~ and by a capacitor ~~(4)~~ which is connected to the first and second power semiconductor switches ~~(2, 3)~~, where p ≥ 1 and each of the p second switching groups ~~(5.1, ..., 5.p)~~ is connected in series with the respectively adjacent second switching group ~~(5.1, ..., 5.p)~~, and each of the p third switching groups ~~(6.1, ..., 6.p)~~ is connected in series with the respectively adjacent third switching group ~~(6.1, ..., 6.p)~~, and the first second switching group ~~(5.1)~~ is connected to the first power semiconductor switch ~~(2)~~ in the n-th first switching group ~~(1.n)~~, and the first third switching group ~~(6.1)~~ is connected to the second power semiconductor switch ~~(3)~~ in the n-th first switching group ~~(1.n)~~, and in that the capacitor ~~(4)~~ in the p-th second switching group ~~(5.p)~~ is connected in series with the capacitor ~~(4)~~ in the p-th third switching group ~~(6.p)~~.

2. (Currently Amended) The converter circuit as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein a voltage limiting network ~~(7)~~ is connected in parallel with the first power semiconductor switch ~~(2)~~ in the n-th first switching group ~~(1.n)~~, and in that a voltage limiting network ~~(7)~~ is connected in parallel with the second power semiconductor switch ~~(3)~~ in the n-th first switching group ~~(1.n)~~.

3. (Currently Amended) The converter circuit as claimed in claim 2, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the voltage limiting network (7) has a capacitor.

4. (Currently Amended) The converter circuit as claimed in claim 2, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the voltage limiting network ~~(7)~~ has a series circuit formed by a resistor with a capacitor.

5. (Currently Amended) The converter circuit as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the n-th first switching group ~~(1.n)~~ has a capacitor ~~(4)~~ which is connected to the first and second power semiconductor switches ~~(2, 3)~~ in the n-th first switching group ~~(1.n)~~, with the first second switching group ~~(5.1)~~ being connected to the capacitor ~~(4)~~ in the n-th first switching group ~~(1.n)~~, and with the first third switching group ~~(6.1)~~ being connected to the capacitor ~~(4)~~ in the n-th first switching group ~~(1.n)~~.

6. (Currently Amended) The converter circuit as claimed in ~~one of claims 1 to 4~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the first and second power semiconductor switches ~~(2, 3)~~ in the first second switching group ~~(5.1)~~ are connected to one another, with the junction point of the first and second power semiconductor switches ~~(2, 3)~~ in the first second switching group ~~(5.1)~~ being connected to the first power semiconductor switch ~~(2)~~ in the n-th first switching group ~~(1.n)~~, and in that the first and second power semiconductor switches ~~(2, 3)~~ in the first third switching group ~~(6.1)~~ are connected to one another, with the junction point of the first and second power semiconductor switches ~~(2, 3)~~ in the first third switching group ~~(6.1)~~ being connected to the second power semiconductor switch ~~(3)~~ in the n-th first switching group ~~(1.n)~~.

7. (Currently Amended) The converter circuit as claimed in claim 5, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the first and second power semiconductor switches ~~(2, 3)~~ in the first second switching group ~~(5.1)~~ are connected to one another, with the junction point of the first and second power semiconductor switches ~~(2, 3)~~ in the first second switching group ~~(5.1)~~ being connected to the junction point of the capacitor ~~(4)~~ in the n-th first switching group ~~(1.n)~~ and the first power semiconductor switch ~~(2)~~ in the n-th first switching group ~~(1.n)~~, and in that the first and second power semiconductor switches ~~(2, 3)~~ in the first third switching group ~~(6.1)~~ are connected to one another, with the junction point of the first and second power semiconductor switches ~~(2, 3)~~ in the first third switching group ~~(6.1)~~ being connected to the junction point of the capacitor ~~(4)~~ in the n-th first switching group ~~(1.n)~~ and the second power semiconductor switch ~~(3)~~ in the n-th first switching group ~~(1.n)~~.

8. (Currently Amended) The converter circuit as claimed in ~~one of claims 1 to 7~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the total number of then first switching groups ~~(1.1, ..., 1.n)~~ corresponds to the total number of the p second and third switching groups ~~(5.1, ..., 5.p; 6.1, ..., 6.p)~~.

9. (Currently Amended) The converter circuit as claimed in ~~one of claims 1 to 7~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the total number of the n first switching groups ~~(1.1, ..., 1.n)~~ is less than the total number of the p second and third switching groups ~~(5.1, ..., 5.p; 6.1, ..., 6.p)~~.

10. (Currently Amended) The converter circuit as claimed in ~~one of claims 1 to 7~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the total number of the n first switching groups ~~(1.1, ..., 1.n)~~ is greater than the total number of the p second and third switching groups ~~(5.1, ..., 5.p; 6.1, ..., 6.p)~~.

11. Currently Amended)The converter circuit as claimed in ~~one of claims 1 to 10~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the first power semiconductor switch ~~(2)~~ and the second power semiconductor switch ~~(3)~~ in each switching group ~~(1.1, ..., 1.n;~~

~~5.1, ..., 5.p; 6.1, ..., 6.p)~~ are in each case in the form of a bidirectional power semiconductor switch.

12. (Currently Amended) The converter circuit as claimed in ~~one of claims 1 to 10~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the first power semiconductor switch ~~(2)~~ in each first and in each second switching group ~~(1.1, ..., 1.n; 5.1, ..., 5.p)~~ is a bidirectional power semiconductor switch, ~~in that~~ wherein the second power semiconductor switch ~~(3)~~ in each first and in each third switching group ~~(1.1, ..., 1.n; 6.1, ..., 6.p)~~ is a bidirectional power semiconductor switch, and ~~in that~~ wherein the second power semiconductor switch ~~(3)~~ in each second switching group ~~(5.1, ..., 5.p)~~ and the first power semiconductor switch ~~(2)~~ in each third switching group ~~(6.1, ..., 6.p)~~ are in each case in the form of a unidirectional power semiconductor switch.

13. (Currently Amended) The converter circuit as claimed in ~~one of claims 1 to 10~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the first power semiconductor switch ~~(2)~~ in each first and in each third switching group ~~(1.1, ..., 1.n; 6.1, ..., 6.p)~~ is a bidirectional power semiconductor switch, ~~in that~~ wherein the second power semiconductor switch ~~(3)~~ in each first and in each second switching group ~~(1.1, ...,1.n; 5.1, ..., 5.p)~~ is a bidirectional power semiconductor switch, and ~~in that~~ wherein the first power semiconductor switch ~~(2)~~ in each second switching group ~~(5.1, ..., 5.p)~~ and the second power semiconductor switch ~~(3)~~ in each third switching group ~~(6.1, ..., 6.p)~~ is a unidirectional power semiconductor switch.

14. (Currently Amended) The converter circuit as claimed in ~~one of claims 1 to 10~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the first power semiconductor switch ~~(2)~~ and the second power semiconductor switch ~~(3)~~ in each first switching group ~~(1.1, ..., 1.n)~~ are in each case in the form of a bidirectional power semiconductor switch, and ~~in that~~ wherein the first power semiconductor switch ~~(2)~~ and the second power semiconductor switch ~~(3)~~ in each second switching group ~~(5.1, ..., 5.p)~~ and in each third switching group ~~(6.1, ..., 6.p)~~ are in each case in the form of a unidirectional power semiconductor switch.

15. (Currently Amended) The converter circuit as claimed in ~~one of claims 11 to 14~~ claim 11, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the bidirectional power semiconductor switch is formed by an electronic component which can be driven and carries current in only one direction, and by a passive electronic component which is connected back-to-back in parallel with this, cannot be driven and carries current in only one direction.

16. (Currently Amended) The converter circuit as claimed in ~~one of claims 12 to 15~~ claim 12, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the unidirectional power semiconductor switch is formed by a passive electronic component which cannot be driven and carries current in only one direction.

17. (Currently Amended) The converter circuit as claimed in ~~one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein, in the case of the n first switching groups ~~(1.1, ..., 1.n)~~, the two first power semiconductor switches ~~(2)~~ in respectively adjacent first switching groups ~~(1.1, ..., 1.n)~~ are integrated in a module, and the two second power semiconductor switches ~~(3)~~ in respectively adjacent first switching groups ~~(1.1, ..., 1.n)~~ are integrated in a module.

18. (Currently Amended) The converter circuit as claimed in claim 17, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein, in the case of the p second switching groups ~~(5.1, ..., 5.p)~~, the two first power semiconductor switches ~~(2)~~ in respectively adjacent second switching groups ~~(5.1, ..., 5.p)~~ are integrated in a module, and the two second power semiconductor switches ~~(3)~~ in respectively adjacent second switching groups ~~(5.1, ..., 5.p)~~ are integrated in a module, and ~~in that~~ wherein, in the case of the p third switching groups ~~(6.1, ..., 6.p)~~, the two first power semiconductor switches ~~(2)~~ in respectively adjacent third switching groups ~~(6.1, ..., 6.p)~~ are integrated in a module, and the two second power semiconductor switches ~~(3)~~ in respectively adjacent third switching groups ~~(6.1, ..., 6.p)~~ are integrated in a module.

19. (Currently Amended) The converter circuit as claimed in ~~one of claims 1 to 16~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein, in the case of the n first switching groups ~~(1.1, ..., 1.n)~~ and in the case of the p second and third switching groups ~~(5.1, ..., 5.p; 6.1, ..., 6.p)~~, the first power semiconductor switch ~~(2)~~ and the second power semiconductor switch ~~(3)~~ are in each case integrated in a module.

20. (Currently Amended) The converter circuit as claimed in ~~one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein, if there are a plurality of phases (R, Y, B), the p-th second switching groups ~~(5.p)~~ for the phases (R, Y, B) are connected in parallel with one another, and the p-th third switching groups ~~(6.p)~~ for the phases (R, Y, B) are connected in parallel with one another.

21. (Currently Amended) The converter circuit as claimed in claim 20, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the capacitors ~~(4)~~ in the p-th second switching groups ~~(5.p)~~ for the phases (R, Y, B) are combined to form one capacitor, and ~~in that~~ wherein the capacitors ~~(4)~~ in the p-th third switching groups ~~(6.p)~~ for the phases (R Y, B) are combined to form one capacitor.